

Statement of Charlie Stenholm
Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture
Before the Committee on House Administration
March 1, 2001

Mr. Chairman, I am here today in support of my Chairman and good friend, Larry Combest. As you know, the House Ag Committee has enjoyed a long tradition of bipartisanship; this has continued to grow under Larry's chairmanship. I know that if last November had brought about the changes those on my side of the aisle had hoped for, Larry would also be at my side today.

Larry understands the needs of U.S. agriculture as well as anyone, and he is right on target about the requirements and needs of the House Ag Committee in the 107th Congress. I concur with his assessment. Our committee, like the Committee on House Administration, relies on a seasoned and experienced staff, on both sides of the aisle. Chairman Combest noted that, because of budget constraints, both the majority and the minority were unable to fill staff positions in the 106th Congress.

Under Chairman Combest's leadership in the 106th Congress, the Ag Committee took on a comprehensive reform of the Crop Insurance Program. This was a major step toward restoring the solvency of the agricultural economy. The bulk of our work remains before us in the next "Farm Bill," however.

I understand Chairman Combest is willing to listen to recommendations for improving the farm economy, and I am sure he will welcome your input. Thank you for taking our testimony today. I support the Chairman's proposal for the budget of the House Committee on Agriculture.